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MONTANA River Conversation

A Newsletter of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation • Director Bud Clinch

Spring 2002

## —ROLLING RIVER TRAILERS—

Loaded with several hundred pounds of sand and a self-contained tank to pump and re-circulate water, several bright blue utility trailers are ready to provide water education to Montanans. These "Rolling River Trailers" are stream tables on wheels that demonstrate not only stream dynamics, but watershed principles as well.

The Rolling River is a five-by-ten-foot utility trailer with a six-inch-deep bed that is filled with "sand" (actually, recycled plastic granules). A meandering river or two is scooped out, running from one end to the other. Small figures of houses, cows, and horses are placed on top, along with a barn, corral, and parking lot with cars and farm equipment, to form a simulated village. Trees, foliage, and a few rocks line the riverbank.

When water is turned on at the top of the watershed, it flows through the river and can be used to demonstrate a variety of water-related lessons, including water and sediment transport, erosion, the importance of healthy riparian systems, and good land practices that promote healthy stream systems. The trailers are versatile education tools that can be used either indoors or outdoors. The lessons that can be provided by the miniature watershed are limited only by the imagination of the person using it.

Rolling River Trailers were initiated in Colorado and then adopted in New Mexico. The Montana program is based on a successful effort in New Mexico. The Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) purchased the trailers under a grant from the

**Rolling River**. . . *continued on page 2*

PHOTO BY DNRC

*Over 100 fifth-graders from the Havre area attended this demonstration of a trailer by DNRC's David Martin at Hill County Conservation Days.*



*"To help ensure Montana's land and water resources provide benefits for present and future generations."*

# —A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR—

With May upon us, most of us are beginning to think about gardening, flower beds, Little League, soccer trips, a summer vacation, special hunting permit applications, fishing season, or maybe the upcoming fire season. As for department management, we're heavily involved in preparing for the upcoming legislative session in January 2003. That involves a number of things that concern you and our constituents.

First is the Executive Planning Process, more commonly called EPP, which is the process whereby we prepare a budget for the next biennium. This includes not only our base budget, but also any requests for new funding for new or expanded programs or personal services (wages). Such requests usually are initiated within each program, submitted to the division administrator for approval, advanced to the director for his approval, submitted to the Governor's Budget Office for acceptance into the Governor's proposed budget, and then ultimately presented and defended before the appropriate legislative subcommittee on appropriations. This is a long and arduous process that is culminated by passage of House Bill 2 in the waning days of the legislative session.

Because of projected budget shortfalls due to a decrease in collected revenues, however, this process may be considerably more painful than usual. If you haven't heard, the statewide general fund balance is currently at $28 million. There is a statutory requirement that, if the balance falls to within 1 percent of the appropriated general fund dollars for that biennium, then the Governor must enact cost-savings directives. That magical triggering balance is $26.5 million.

*Director Bud Clinch*

Anticipating that we will ultimately trigger that action, the state budget director has directed all directors to not submit any EPP requests that require any additional general fund dollars over those in our current base. Consequently, DNRC's submitted budget does not have any "new" requests that require general fund dollars. I know that many of you may be disappointed in the inability of the department to move forward on many needs for program and equipment upgrades, but, just as in our personal lives, we must live within our revenues.

In addition to the freeze on new spending, we are also going through an exercise to prioritize a "reduction" in the event that the budget shortfall is greater than expected. That exercise has caused me to place a moratorium on filling any general funded vacant positions. While this may cause temporary hardships and increase existing workloads, it maximizes our flexibility to respond to whatever spending cuts are forthcoming. Hopefully, worst-case scenarios won't develop. But, if they do, we will have positioned ourselves to minimize the impact to our most valuable asset—the employee workforce.

These are unsettling times, but I believe that, by being smart about our allocation of resources, we will emerge just fine. I mention all this because it may be confusing to some if you are asked to prioritize your workload, fulfill some new duties, or abandon some projects. The good news is that Montana is far better off from a state financial perspective than most states.

As always, I know that I can count on you for your understanding, dedication, and performance.

*—BUD*

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**Rolling River** . . . *continued from page 1*

U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The trailers were purchased in October 2001.

Three trailers are currently in operation in Montana. David Martin, education specialist with DNRC's Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARDD), operates a demonstration trailer. Lincoln Conservation District, headquartered in Eureka, operates a trailer for northwestern Montana, while Richland County Conservation District, headquartered in Sidney, sponsors the eastern Rolling River Trailer.

**Rolling River** . . . *continued on page 3*

# —PAY PLAN 20—

The 2001 Legislature authorized Pay Plan 20 as an alternative to the current pay plans, known as Pay Plans 60 and 68. The goal of Pay Plan 20 is to allow agencies greater flexibility in a variety of pay-related issues, including a market-based approach and the creation of agency pay plan rules. Several agencies, including the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Department of Transportation, have moved to Pay Plan 20.

DNRC's Compensation Committee met initially in August 2001 to investigate the possibility of implementing Pay Plan 20. The committee is comprised of these persons:

- Don Artley, Forestry Division Administrator
- Ann Bauchman, Centralized Services Division Administrator
- Tony Liane, Southwestern Area Manager
- Mike Mikota, Personnel Officer
- Tom Schultz, Trust Land Management Division Administrator
- Jack Stults, Water Resources Division Administrator
- John Tubbs, Resource Development Bureau Chief, Conservation and Resource Development Division

**Pay Plan** . . . *continued on page 8*

**Rolling River** . . . *continued from page 2*

Trainer workshops have been held in Kalispell, Missoula, Havre, and Sidney for conservation district personnel, extension agents, teachers, and other resource professionals across the state. The concepts and issues being illustrated can be customized to meet the needs of the local watershed in which a presentation will be made.

The trailers will be making their debut this year at conservation days, fairs, and schools across Montana. ♦

PHOTO BY DNRC

*(At right) MACD's Sarah Carlson and BOR's Brent Esplin stand next to the DNRC demonstration trailer.*

PHOTO BY DNRC

*Prospective presenters learn to run a trailer at this training session in Missoula.*

# —COMPLEX INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TRAINING—

Ten emergency management personnel from eastern and central Montana were recently put through the rigors of an advanced training course on managing natural disasters and hazards. The ten, who are members of the DNRC County Assist Team (CAT), successfully completed an advanced Complex Incident Management course in Redding, Calif. The mission of the CAT team is to provide incident management assistance by working with local jurisdictions faced with emergencies that severely stretch their resources.

Among the members of the CAT team are two DNRC employees: Northeastern Area Fire Program Manager Jerry Buhre and Unit Manager Barny Smith, both of Lewistown. The other team members, each of whom is a member of a local volunteer fire department or emergency response team, are:

- Doug and Linda Williams, Fort Benton
- George Luther and Bud Peterson, Miles City
- Randy Sanders and Chuck Quinell, Savage
- Steve Stanhope, Baker
- Dwight Tague, Terry

Only five other teams—two from California, one from Washington, and one from Oregon—were accepted into the course.

The six-day course presented intensive command and incident management training through a mixture of lectures and practical simulation exercises. The primary objectives were team building, all-hazard incident management techniques, and utilization of the Incident Command system. Participants had to assess, plan, and execute all-hazard management for simulated scenarios such as fires, tornadoes, floods, and evacuations. As part of the simulation, the team prepared objectives, strategies, action plans, news releases, resource orders, financial reports, and cost projections. Simultaneously, the team had to allocate resources to handle the disaster, radio traffic, phone calls, a helicopter crash, television news interviews, and citizen inquiries.

The course offered CAT the opportunity to interact with nationally recognized instructors and learn new information. The knowledge acquired will pay off in the event that a disaster occurs, not only in the team's home communities, but also anywhere in Montana.

The Complex Incident Management Course was developed as a result of the Yellowstone fires in 1988. The course is geared to meet the needs of state and local personnel and to assist them in responding to all-risk and multi-jurisdictional events. Twelve states worked cooperatively with the National Advanced Resource Technology Center, the U.S Forest Service, and the National Association of State Foresters to develop the course. This was only the third time that the course has been offered.

**Complex Incident** . . . *continued on page 8*

PHOTO BY CLIVE ROONEY

*County Assist Team members (from left): Bud Peterson, Steve Stanhope, Randy Sanders, Jerry Buhre, Barny Smith, Linda Williams, Doug Williams, George Luther, Chuck Quinnell, and Dwight Tague*

# —PAINTED ROCKS OPERATIONS—

*This article, by Larry Schock, is reprinted from the Winter 2002 issue of* Water Lines.

Painted Rocks Dam is a DNRC-managed dam located on the West Fork of the Bitterroot River approximately 22 miles south of Darby. The dam was built in 1939, primarily as an irrigation structure with some limited seasonal recreational uses.

The earthen embankment is 800 feet long and 143 feet high. When filled to the crest of the spillway, the dam impounds 31,706 acre-feet (AF) of water, which cover 655 acres. DNRC has contracts to deliver 15,000 AF for instream fisheries flows and 10,000 AF for irrigation. The contracts require delivery of the water between May 1 and September 30.

The irrigation water is delivered as far north as Florence (approximately 65 miles downstream), and instream fishery flows are protected as far as Bell Crossing (approximately 48 miles downstream).

DNRC's Missoula Water Resources Regional Office staff acts as the dam tender, ensuring that the reservoir is filled in a timely fashion and that the contracted water is delivered on demand.

The target date for the reservoir to reach full pool is Memorial Day weekend in a normal year and mid-May during drought years. Since the reservoir is used seasonally as a flat-water recreation area, it is important to ensure that it is full for the unofficial start of the recreation season.

The reservoir is filled as spring runoff accelerates. After the reservoir stops spilling, the gates are adjusted weekly to ensure that inflows equal outflows and that the reservoir remains at full pool, until the water is called for.

Representatives of the Painted Rocks Water Users Association and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (DFWP) determine the contract water delivery. Contract water is usually called for starting in early July and is delivered until the end of September.

The District Court has appointed Vern Woolsey as the water commissioner for the Bitterroot River. Vern is paid by the Painted Rocks Water Users Association and DFWP to ensure the protection and delivery of their contracted water. Therefore, Vern not only ensures that releases are made at the reservoir, but he is also the person who makes sure that the water makes it all of the way to the last water user in Florence.

During normal years the water stored in Painted Rocks Reservoir ensures robust crops and a healthy fisheries in the Bitterroot River. Painted Rocks contract water is the lifeline of the Bitterroot River during drought years. The stored water not only allows an extended season for valley irrigators, but it also provides instream flows for fisheries and recreation.

DFWP has identified an optimum low flow rate of 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the Bell Crossing Bridge. Prior to the DFWP purchase of water, average late summer flows at Bell Crossing were in the 40 to 50 cfs range and were sometimes as low as 25 cfs. Since that purchase of Painted Rocks water, DFWP has consistently been able to meet the targeted flow rate at Bell Crossing during normal years. Even during the last two years of severe drought, the flows at Bell Crossing have not fallen below 200 cfs, helping to ensure a healthy Bitterroot River fishery. ◆

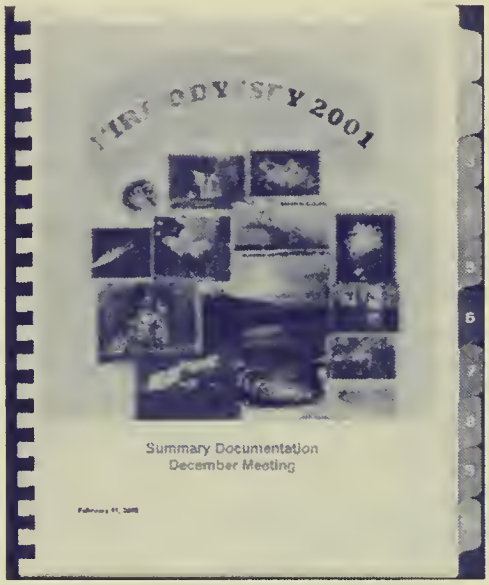
PHOTO BY ART TAYLOR

*Painted Rocks Reservoir, south of Darby*

# —FIRE ODYSSEY 2001—

## A New Vision for the Fire and Aviation Management Bureau

During the week of December 3-7, 2001, an enthusiastic group of fire professionals met to discuss, exchange, and debate issues, ideas, and concerns. The discussion occurred at many levels, from one-on-one to the entire group of over 100 individuals. The discourse that occurred was for the benefit—and, ultimately, the direction—of DNRC's Fire and Aviation Management Bureau (FAMB).




*Summary report containing Fire Odyssey documentation*

The session was called Fire Odyssey 2001 because, in many ways, it truly was an odyssey of ideas and concepts, and a journey that will set the tone and direction of how DNRC, as the state wildland fire suppression agency, will meet its mission and goals throughout the next decade.

Because it contains the facilities needed to handle the number of folks involved in the statewide review, the Northern Rockies Training Center in Missoula was the site of Fire Odyssey 2001. Those in attendance included FAMB employees; personnel from federal agencies (the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs); members of rural, county, and volunteer fire departments; and a host of others.

The fire odyssey concept is not new to DNRC. In 1992, a similar endeavor, then called Fire Odyssey 2000, was held for the same reason. The fire professionals who attended then were also tasked with finding solutions to questions, ultimately to ensure that FAMB would accomplish its goals.

According to FAMB Chief Tim Murphy, these reviews are conducted routinely to help ensure that FAMB is not only meeting its goals, but also accomplishing them in a sound and fiscally responsible fashion. "The object of these programmatic reviews is to flesh out issues or items that need to be reviewed or addressed. Those issues and items are then included into a Strategic Action Plan. The plan then becomes the direction of FAMB for the next several years," explained Murphy.

Planning for Fire Odyssey 2001 began in the spring of 2001, with the formation of an Incident Management Team (IMT). IMTs are commonly used in the management of fire incidents, and, since this review was comprised of and for fire personnel, it only made sense to put an IMT in place.

Upon formation, IMT set to the task of planning the odyssey. The IMT incident commander was Missoula Unit Manager Jonathan Hansen. Numerous DNRC employees were charged with specific duties, such as planning, finance, and logistics.

Throughout the next nine months, IMT made plans, compiled data, conducted research, held meetings, and sought input on eight specific areas of concern for FAMB. Those eight areas are:

- All-risk emergency response
- Funding and staffing
- Interagency relations
- Mission statement
- Personnel issues
- Public expectations
- Technology
- BIN (miscellaneous) items

During the odyssey, these eight areas were specifically addressed, which resulted in the identification of numerous issues.

Fire Odyssey . . . *continued on page 7*

Fire Odyssey . . . *continued from page 6*

Input on these issues was documented, placed under specific headings, and handed off to a Strategic Action Committee (SAC), which is another IMT. The team consists of these individuals:

*DNRC Employees*

- Dwayne Andrews, Eastern Land Office Manager
- Greg Archie, Plains Unit Fire Supervisor
- Jerry Buhre, Northeastern Land Office Fire Program Manager
- Larry Bush, FAMB Fire Assessment Program Manager
- Michelle Ekstrom, Missoula Unit Office Manager
- Jon Hansen, Missoula Unit Manager
- Butch Kroll, Helena Unit Engine Foreman
- Ted Mead, Northwestern Land Office Fire Program Manager
- John Monzie, FAMB Fire Suppression Supervisor
- Colin Moon, Clearwater Unit Fire Supervisor
- Steve Wallace, Clearwater Unit Manager

*Other Committee Members*

- Bob Fry, Disaster and Emergency Services
- Paul Laisey, Missoula Rural Fire Department
- Jerry Smith, Department of Justice

SAC is spearheaded by Eastern Land Office Area Manager Dwayne Andrews, who was also involved in Fire Odyssey 2000.

SAC's mission is to develop a strategic direction for the fire program and to sift through and decipher the more than 160 recommendations presented during Fire Odyssey 2001. Much of SAC's challenge is to work out the particulars of the issues, research the details, and come up with goals, objectives, and viable solutions to problems that are current issues in FAMB.

According to Andrews, this is no easy task. "We have much work to do in FAMB to ensure that we are setting a strategic direction for the fire program, meeting our goals and objectives, and doing so in a safe, fiscally responsible manner within the changing environment we call wildland fire suppression." Andrews said, "We are constantly dealing with new challenges such as the wildland/urban interface, changing standards and regulations, and interagency agreements and cooperation. The arena of suppressing wildland fires in the last few years has changed dramatically. Fire Odyssey 2001 and SAC are charged with making sure that FAMB is keeping up and accomplishing our own goals and the expectations of all Montanans."

SAC has conducted two meetings thus far, both in Fort Benton. Both meetings were productive, giving shape, form, and direction to SAC based mainly on the issues and ideas brought forth from the odyssey. The new FAMB mission statement (see sidebar, below) is

Fire Odyssey . . . *continued on page 8*

**NEW GUIDANCE FOR THE DNRC FIRE AND AVIATION MANAGEMENT BUREAU**

Here are FAMB's new program mission statement and guiding principles, which were developed during Fire Odyssey 2001 and adopted by the Strategic Action Committee.

MISSION STATEMENT

Provide resources, leadership, and coordination to Montana's wildfire services, accomplished through wildfire prevention, training, preparedness, and safe, aggressive suppression actions to protect lives, property, and natural resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Firefighter and public safety is always our primary objective.

We recognize and value the motivation and creativity of our employees and cooperators.

We are entrusted by the public and our employees to tell the truth, follow through on commitments, and be consistent in our actions.

We operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

We increase the understanding of our mission, improve our efficiency, and complete clearly defined goals through partnerships with all of our cooperators.

We provide extensive training to successfully carry out our mission.

As directed, DNRC supports cooperators in non-wildfire incidents.

**Pay Plan** . . . *continued from page 3*

The committee set out to determine what states to gather market data from, when to implement the new plan, and how fast to move to market. Since then, the committee has met frequently to review market data from the Montana Department of Administration (DOA), discuss budget ramifications, and draft pay plan rules.

Originally, DNRC decided to survey the states of Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. However, DOA asked all agencies to look at the market data it was developing. DOA's approach, called the "Market Portfolio Approach," uses a number of market surveys covering the private and public sectors in a variety of states.

Currently, DNRC has accumulated market data from DOA's Personnel Division on about 85 percent of the non-managerial positions. Because DOA has chosen not to complete market portfolios for managerial positions at this time, the Compensation Committee decided to derive the markets for DNRC's managerial positions from the markets from Pay Plans 60 and 68. The Compensation Committee is working with DOA to convince it to complete all markets.

The Compensation Committee recommended that divisions move one-third of the way to market, which equates to a pay increase between 1 percent and 5 percent for positions that are under market. Moving divisions one-third of the way to market will cost approximately $500,000.

Prior to implementation, each employee will receive a document from the Personnel Bureau providing details pertinent to that individual's pay. Implementation is set for the last pay period in May, with the pay increases for the under market positions showing up the first payday in June 2002.

The new pay plan rules became official during the Compensation Committee's meeting on May 7. Markets will be reviewed biennially, as will the ability to move employees closer to market within DNRC's current budget constraints. ◆

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**Complex Incident** . . . *continued from page 4*

DNRC provided funding for CAT to attend this training. As Montana's wildland fire suppression agency, DNRC is integrally involved with local, county, and rural fire departments across the state, as well as emergency response teams. DNRC provides training, equipment, and personnel, mainly in support of wildland fires, but also for other disasters that occur statewide. Sending CAT to the Complex Incident Management course helps ensure that personnel, both DNRC and volunteer, receive the necessary training to manage hazardous situations in Montana. ◆

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**Fire Odyssey** . . . *continued from page 7*

the first finished project that has emerged from Fire Odyssey 2001. Communication about SAC's progress presents its own challenge, which will be handled in part by issuing periodic progress reports, posting meeting notes on the Internet, and printing periodic updates in various newsletters. The next SAC meeting will be held in Montana City on July 9-10.

More information about Fire Odyssey 2001 can be found at the following website: **www.dnrc.state.mt.us/forestry/dnrcfiresite/fireodyssey1.htm** ◆

# —EMPLOYEE AWARDS—

## Public Land Professional Award

Dwayne Andrews, a long-time DNRC employee and area manager of DNRC's Eastern Land Office, recently received the prestigious Public Land Professional of the Year Award. This national award is presented annually by the Public Lands Foundation, a Virginia-based organization dedicated to enhancing the ecological balance of lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Andrews was recognized for his work, as a member of the southeastern Montana Resource Advisory Council (RAC), on a travel management plan in eastern Montana.

The Knowlton Travel Management Plan is a comprehensive plan that addresses such issues as increasing traffic, trespassing on private land, and damage to highly erodible land and fragile vegetation. Preparation of this plan was a special effort by the RAC and the Miles City Field Office of the BLM.

According to Andrews, government agencies typically develop a plan and present it to the public through a formal and sometimes rigid process. The process followed in the Knowlton plan effort, however, was significantly different, in that the users of the land were involved in plan development from the beginning. "Because of this," said Andrews, "we have a comprehensive plan that addresses all concerns and issues. All parties reached an agreement, and the users and the involved agencies accepted the final product before it was formally presented to the BLM. It was the community and local involvement that was the catalyst for the final product and its success."

Two other eastern Montanans were also recipients of the award for their work on the travel management plan. Those men are Bill Milton, a Roundup rancher, and David Squires, a natural resource specialist with BLM's Miles City Field Office. Andrews, Milton, and Squires were presented the awards on February 28 in the BLM Director's Office in Washington, D.C.

Congratulations, Dwayne! ♦

PHOTO BY DONNIE CABRERA

*Dwayne Andrews (left) receives his award from George Lea, president of the Public Lands Foundation, in the BLM Director's Office, Washington, D.C.*

## One-of-a-Kind Award

Laurie Zeller, of DNRC's Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARDD), recently received a one-of-a-kind award from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (DFWP) for her work with the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Committee. Laurie, a DNRC employee for 22 years, is a resource specialist in the Conservation Districts Bureau.

The Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Committee was formed in 1994 to streamline the permitting process. This 20-member committee is comprised of representatives of conservation districts, industry, and state agencies.

The committee's original intent was to create one permit for any kind of stream work. Finding that was not feasible, the focus changed to cleaning up the 310 permitting process and developing a joint application form to make it easier for people to comply with all of the regulations. As staff to the committee, Laurie contributed greatly to its achievements, including:

- Drafting legislation to clarify the law
- Drafting model rules for conservation districts
- Revising the state's administrative rule setting minimum standards for implementing the law
- Changing and standardizing forms
- Developing a joint 310 application form that is used by several state, federal, and local permitting agencies

One-of-a-Kind . . . *continued on page 10*

*DNRConversation* is an employee newsletter published quarterly by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Please send news articles or ideas for articles to your division liaison or to any member of the Editorial Board.

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One-of-a-Kind . . . *continued from page 9*

- Developing *Montana Stream Permitting*, a 125-page guide for permit reviewers
- Doing local training

The award from DFWP was in appreciation for her hard work on these and other projects.

Montanans who enjoy the beautiful waters of our state for years to come will be benefiting from the accomplishments of Laurie and the committee. Thank you, and "Good job!" ◆

*Glenn Phillips, chief of DFWP's Habitat Protection Bureau, presents a specially designed plaque to CARDD's Laurie Zeller.*

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Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
1625 Eleventh Avenue
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